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PROGRESS, THE LAW OF THE MISSIONARY WORK.

"Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before."—Philippians iii. 13.

When this service, by another's relinquishing it, was unexpectedly devolved on me, I too should most gladly have declined it, on account of the imperfect state of my health, had there been any one to whom I was at liberty to transfer it. And there was another reason which might well have led me to shrink from the duty of this hour, were it not that providential calls are designed for those to whom they come. I regard the present occasion as of very great sacredness, and as imposing on me one of the gravest responsibilities of my life. The representatives of three thousand churches are assembled to consult together upon the work of giving the gospel to the world. They have appointed me to speak to them in the name of Christ, concerning the business of their meeting: surely I may ask without disparaging myself or any other person, who is sufficient for the just performance of such an office! It calls for so unusual an unction from above, for so peculiar and uncommon a baptism of the Holy Spirit, not to mention other high qualifications, that I suppose no one living, duly aware of its demands, could undertake it without fear and trembling.

When I began to cast about my thought to find an appropriate subject of discourse, this Missionary Institution presented itself before

*The author was the alternate of the Rev. Dr. Tyler of the East Windsor Theological Institute.

me in two aspects. At first I beheld it as having already a vast and most weighty charge on its hands : eighty-six stations among the distant heathen, with five hundred laborers ; sixty-two churches with twenty-three thousand members ; and more than six hundred schools with twenty-seven thousand pupils ; besides numerous printing establishments, with their founderies and presses for the use of the missions : a trust demanding so large a measure of liberality and of devoted and patient care, and being in itself of so unrestrainable a tendency to growth, that the fear would obtrude itself, of its becoming a burden which would not be long endured, without retrenchment and reduction. And this apprehension was strengthened by the monthly returns of deficiency to meet the expenses, which, until lately, was becoming larger and larger ; and also by the following remarks in the last Annual Report : "While the heathen world never presented such openings as now for missionary labors, there are all over christendom indications as if the work would not be conducted on a much broader scale, without a new impulse from on high." "We are now only where it was needful we should have been four years ago." "This great and favored community has been virtually at a stand for a series of years in the work of Foreign Missions : " and there was yet further confirmation to this forboding, in certain intimations here and there given, that the Board has advanced about as far as it is expedient it should go in this work. These things almost seemed decisive in favor of my making a discourse against retrogression—of undertaking to demonstrate that the apprehension adverted to is groundless ; that no station need be surrendered, no missionary recalled, no church left in its infancy, as sheep in the wilderness, without a shepherd ; no school dissolved ; no pupil dismissed : that the business of the Society is in no danger of becoming unmanageable ; that this noble work of modern evangelism need not commence so soon a backward movement. In this decision, however, I could not rest ; for while I mused, this association assumed another appearance. I regarded it as sustaining other relations and responsibilities. It appeared in my view as a company of the followers of Christ, banded together by his command and his spirit, and also by mutual covenants and pledges to attempt the Evangelization of the world. Instantly, the large and numerous missionary associations already existing, with the extreme difficulty of sustaining them, passed from notice. They could no longer be thought of. For now the whole earth, with its corruption, guilt, and ruin presented itself as the field of action, and the perfect occupation of it with Christian churches and institutions was the labor to be done—the burden to be borne. To this enterprise, in its world-wide extent, and with its demand for resources existing only in God, every member of this Board stood committed, by virtue of his holy calling, so that it had been a violation of their Christian compact to disavow the accomplishment of this, as what they distinctly designed, and what they assuredly expected, along with others, and with help from God, to be instrumental in achieving.

With this apprehension of their character and undertaking, such a strain of address as the first view suggested, could have no reconciliation. It was dismissed at once, and instead thereof, the point which it seemed most needful for me to enlarge upon before my Fathers and Brethren of this sacred association, was that they go forward with their undertaking, on the principle which governed the Apostle in his personal religion; namely, that of forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before. Accordingly I determined to speak to you with whatever measure of grace and strength God might give me, ON THE REASONS FOR PROGRESS IN THE MISSIONARY WORK—THE WORK OF EVANGELIZING THE WORLD.

I. A great and fundamental reason lies in the very nature of Christianity. In the Christian scheme the following facts are essential:—that mankind are in a state of sin, and dying in this state are utterly lost; that their recovery can be effected only by their being christianized, or brought under the power of the gospel; that the gospel can do nothing where it has not been propagated or is unknown; that Christian Missions are the necessary means of its propagation, and that under the Divine blessing, these means are adequate, and their end certain. These facts which are, we may say, the groundwork of missions, their plea, their justification, their praise, are also an argument which no one can answer, for their most thorough and vigorous prosecution. They make an appeal to the hearts of Christians, which if it was justly responded to, would at once constitute the universal church a missionary society, and would keep missions advancing with increasing speed and power, until no man would be left beneath the wide vault of heaven without the knowledge of the gospel. These great primary truths of Christianity render all degrees of missionary apathy in the church her unspeakable dishonor and reproach, implying unparalleled hardness of heart, if not downright insincerity in her confession of Christ. We propound it, therefore, as a matter self-evident and unquestionable, that Christianity should either be renounced as an imposture, or else be propagated through the world with all possible diligence; that there is no middle way, which reason does not instantly repudiate, between denying the gospel altogether and going forward with the work of spreading it among the nations of the earth, until the universal human race is brought under its influence.

II. The next reason is that the great Missionary Commandment has not passed away. The charge of Christ to his first disciples was meant for us who are here this day, as absolutely and perfectly as it was for them. If our Divine Lord were at this meeting in bodily presence, and standing up visibly before us, should address to us the words, "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth: go ye therefore into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;"

we should be under no obligation to obey him which is not now upon us. The proof of this is whatever demonstrates that Christianity was meant to be a permanent institute. The command to christianize mankind is a part of Christianity, as much so as the law of brotherly love, or the ordinance requiring the celebration of the death of Christ. To submit to the gospel is to make this command a rule of conduct. It is in the Christian's code, and why is he not as firmly bound by it, as by the precept, "Let brotherly love continue;" or by any other statute which the gospel enjoins? Indeed there is proof special and peculiar that this command was not given to the first disciples, except as including their successors. This proof exists in the annexed promise of our Lord, that he himself would be with them through successive generations till the end of the world, a promise which admitted of no fulfilment, and was unintelligible, on the supposition that the first disciples alone were in his intention.

Now why is not this a reason for advancing in the missionary work, which with every Christian should be as determinative and controlling as the forces which keep the orbs of heaven in their eternal circuit round the sun. It surely should have had this influence on the first christians, and why on them only? We cannot all be foreign missionaries; but we all can either go, or send, or aid in sending others; and what we are now solemnly insisting upon is, that whatever can be done herein, by every member of the church, is required to be done, under the sanction of law, by the Almighty Sovereign himself. It is our testimony, in the name of Christ, that no disciple of his is left at liberty in this matter; that he is bound by his oath of allegiance; that necessity is laid upon him; that he may no more cease from doing what he can in the work of missions than from his daily prayers, or from revering the name of Christ, or believing in him as the Savior of the world.

III. It should be a motive to increased progress that hitherto, almost from the beginning, the Missionary Law has been, in respect of actual observance by the church, so nearly as an obsolete and dead letter. It has not been expunged but with exceptions, serving only to render the general fact more astonishing, it has had no exemption as a part of commanded and scriptural piety. It has not been so with the other laws of Christianity. Imperfectly as they have been kept, not one of them has by the general and allowed and unlamented disregard of the church, been deposed from their rank and authority as laws, binding on the conscience under the sanction of Divine majesty and power. No; this has been the peculiar fate of the one command to evangelize the world. The first disciples were almost impatient to obey this command; they were for a time laid under a restraint. As soon as that restraint was removed they devoted themselves and their substance to the propagation of Christianity, and their subsequent life was in unbroken harmony with this noble beginning. They ceased not to look upon their Mas-

ter's last great charge as embodying his sovereign will, and his eternal majesty. They never consulted together as to whether it was expedient to undertake to fulfil it. They never inquired whether its fulfilment was practicable, but implicitly bowed before it, as revealing the pleasure, and pledging the supporting grace of their Lord. But how few have, in this respect, imitated these loyal disciples? During all the following centuries the church at large lay almost as in the sleep of death, as to a sense of obligation to carry the message of redeeming love to the nations of the world. Individuals there were, great and singular spirits, who felt themselves bound by this precept. At different times also, organized exertions were made, more or less extensively, to spread nominal Christianity in some countries; but let the page of history be turned to, which records of the general church at any period after the first, the merging of her will into that of her King and Head, in regard to this one matter of christianizing mankind, or any just acknowledgment of his prerogative as Lawgiver and Ruler herein. It might be edifying, if there were time, to give the evidence on this point, directly and at length, from the annals of Christian Missions, so called. But the fact is no less certain than the church's continued existence. Never, since the primitive era, has she given indication that she felt herself under the sanction of any authority to evangelize the nations of the earth, while by twenty millions a-year, during eighteen centuries, they have been passing to their eternal destiny, strangers to the influence of God's recovering grace. And shall not the faithlessness of so many ages, with the countless and endless enormities which it has entailed, admonish us not to pause quite yet in our begun career of evangelism, but rather do what in us lies to retrieve the past by augmented haste in our movements?

IV. We should think only of quickening our progress, when we consider how slow has been our course since we began, and what little advance we have made. When for the time, now about half a century, the energies of the whole church should have been enlisted on the largest scale of operation, and the work nearly or quite done, O how partial and languid have been our movements! We have done but little beyond launching forth in this enterprise: we have hardly spread our sails to the wind.

Slow and inconsiderable, however, as has been our advance, compared to what it should have been, we would not speak disparagingly of that which has been done. The difference in itself, is not small, between the present and forty years ago, in regard to Missionary operations. It deserves our fervent thanksgivings, that evangelism—not worldly policy and martial power, under the cloak of religion, aiming chiefly at temporal aggrandisement and nominal submission—but the pure and primitive missionary spirit, seeking simply to save the souls of men,—is now employing 1500 missionaries at 1200 central stations, assisted by 5000 native and other salaried agents, at an

expense of two and a half millions of dollars a year.* The missions of the Protestant Church, in its various branches, during the last forty or fifty years, are doubtless more considerable, in their direct and indirect relations to the worlds' salvation, than those of the foregoing ten or fifteen centuries. It is only, however, a contrast with the past that excites our joy. When we look again upon the vast field of human shame and woe that lies outspread in every direction, to the remotest bounds of the earth, and think of our obligations and privileges, and of the church's thousand years sleep over the very concern of her existence, no feelings seem appropriate but those of astonishment and grief, that the scale of our missionary proceedings should be so small. If we compare it with that of our Home operations, inadequate as that is, the inequality appears enormous. What the Protestant Church gives for the evangelization of the world is less than a tenth—yea, if we do not misreckon, than the fifth of a tenth of what she expends on herself. Out of her 80,000 ministers, but 1500 are foreign missionaries. Without determining precisely the proportion of resources which should be employed abroad, the following considerations throw light enough on this subject to stir the whole church to her centre, with the spirit of reform: First, that she is not more under law to care for her own well-being, than she is to evangelize the world. Secondly, that the unevangelised portion of mankind is at least five times as large as the other portion; and thirdly, that in propagating Christianity, the Apostle's rule should be followed as essentially equitable and Christian, "To whom he was not spoken of they shall see, and they that have not heard shall understand." We do not undertake to give with precision the results of a just application of these facts, but we do affirm with heaviness and sorrow of heart, that it is not charitable—no, it is neither merciful nor just on the part of the church, that of a race all equally and infinitely needing the gospel, and equally entitled to it by the grace and commandment of God, they should allow one-fifth the privilege of hearing the joyful sound all their life-time, while the rest, through sixty generations, should be left in total ignorance of the fact that a Savior has visited the world. There is in this inequality a guilt which should fill the church with the profoundest grief.—It tramples upon the great foundation law of God's empire: it makes void the Almighty Redeemer's last and most imperative charge; it shows indifference to his honor; and what wonder, that while the consequence to the world has been its continued and progressive ruin, the church should have been enduring an incessant struggle for existence, and should be compelled to acknowledge the survival of her exposures and conflicts as the greatest of wonders.

But the whole truth has not been told. It is not the disproportionate allotment of the Church's actual expenditures and ministry, that

* These statistics are from Dr. Harris, who appears to have taken much care to make them correct.

measures her indebtedness. She would be incalculably at fault, if of these, she divided to the Heathen all that would fall to them. For these collectively are immensely deficient. Then would she be found as a faithful steward in this matter, if the expenditures for all purposes were as generous, and the ministry as able and as large, as the interest and honor of Christ demand; and further, if her private members were all duly engaged in the work of human salvation; and if now the Heathen should have their full share: here is the standard by which the Church should judge herself, as to her arrears to the world. Who can estimate the amount? Shall we discharge it, shall we not be adding to it incalculably and continually, if we not do proceed upon a broader scale of operations than that with which we have been heretofore content?

V. The tokens of the Divine complacency in the missions of these times are most inspiring motives to progress in them. These are embraced, in the condition in which the Church has been advancing since our missions began, in the success of these missions, and in the signs of the times as promising greater success.

1. From the time we began our missionary work, the state of our churches has, on the whole, been one of progressive prosperity. The entrance on that work was the dawn of a good day which has been growing brighter and brighter, and which, if we falter not in our undertaking, will, doubtless, continue to shine more and more, until its light shall become seven fold, as the light of seven days. This favorable and advancing change is the result of no hidden instrumentality; but, manifestly, of the blessing of God on the missionary undertaking. This movement originated other kindred and subservient ones, as the necessary means of its accomplishment, and while all have been conspiring together to forward the general design, they have been as life to the dead to those who have been under their influence. The connection of good agencies here is easily traced. The resolution being once seriously taken to give mankind the gospel, the necessity was soon felt for the translation and diffusion of the scriptures, for the increase and improvement of the ministry, for the multiplication and distribution of religious books; and as its accomplishment advanced, particular evils called for their own means of reform: and while the vast foreign sphere opened more and more to view, with all its crying demands for the gospel, the conviction became deeper and deeper as to the necessity of giving increased attention to the interests of Home, the source, under God, of supplies to the Heathen. In the mean time every thing tended to impart a sense of dependence on God, and to cherish the spirit of prayer, for the effusion of the Divine influence. The result was, that a system of benevolent agencies arose, which has distinguished the age above all that have preceded it, since the primitive triumphs of Christianity.

Various incidental benefits have followed. Christians of different

sects meeting often together for prayer and consultation, in reference to plans and measures connected with the cause of human salvation, have, under the power of that paramount and common object, forgotten their party names and interests; and thus the evils of sectarianism have been gradually disappearing, and Christian union advancing; insomuch, that the time seems rapidly approaching when denominational peculiarities among the evangelical sects, will be indeed, but as the differences among members of the same family, or regiments of the same loyal and united army.—Again, there has been a remarkable revival of Biblical study and learning, as it might have been expected there would be, when the enterprise was undertaken, of publishing the scriptures, in the various languages of the earth. There has also been an improvement in the science of theology, the result of its being pursued under practical influences, and in its relations to practical effect. In the same way the general pulpit has been improved; and, likewise, by regular consequence the general piety of the Church. And to crown all, outpourings of the Holy Spirit have been granted in increasing power, and also with increasing frequency, until revivals of religion, scarcely inferior to those of the apostolic period, have become especially in our land, ordinary and every day occurrences, to which scoffers and gainsayers, have almost become weary of making opposition.

It is difficult to appreciate the change which has taken place. There is, we know, a great difference of impression in regard to it. That there are some things in it to be deplored, perhaps no one will deny. But viewing it in all its aspects, it appears to us, both in itself and especially in its promise, entitled to our grateful and adoring admiration. We doubt if any one has an adequate sense of its importance, or can have, until the existing state of things shall become historical and be surveyed as lying in the past, connected with antecedent times and with the just results of its own influences and events. If by pausing in the work of missions we should ultimately throw the Church back to where she was before, then would it be seen, whether an advance had been made or not. Who can think we should not sustain a mighty and irreparable loss, and deserve for our inconstancy the indignation of God and man.

2. But we note the Divine pleasure in our work in the success which has attended it, as well as in the prosperity of the Church. Our success is disparaged by comparing it with that of the primitive days; but this comparison should not be made without also comparing the primitive times and the present, in regard both to their respective measures of the missionary spirit, and to their means and facilities of evangelization. If in Christ's first little flock, there was a greater amount of the proper kind of power than can now be collected out of the one hundred and fifty millions of Protestant christendom, why should it be thought that our success will bear no proportion to theirs, unless its absolute quantity be equal? What if among the early disci-

ples, the proportion of those having the missionary spirit, were as it is in our churches ; and, what if these few had possessed no more of that spirit than the generality of the modern friends of missions ; then, had their scale of labors been nearer to ours : and would they have so far transcended us in success ? If the Church now were made up of missionaries, devoted in life and substance to the spread of the gospel, then might we wonder if there was much more tardiness in the work of evangelization under our agency, than there was under that of the first Christians ? But when it is considered, that out of eighty thousand Protestant ministers, only fifteen hundred are employed in foreign missions, and that of these, there is not, perhaps, one Brainerd, not to say a Paul in the spirit of evangelism ; and also that while among the private members of the first Church, no man said "ought that he had, was his own," among us, there is almost no man who does not practically say just the reverse ; giving for the spread of the gospel, out of his abundance, and living as self-indulgently as though he gave nothing ; when it is kept in mind that such is our comparative measure of the missionary spirit, notwithstanding that this is termed a missionary age, must not the intelligent and sound conclusion be, that the disproportion in our success, is not that so little, but that so much, beyond all ground of anticipation has resulted from our missions ?

But account, we said, should also be taken of the difference of means and advantages. The first propagators of the gospel had a supernatural use of speech and other miraculous powers, which almost superseded the necessity of preparative and indirect modes of influence. They were perfectly equipt for preaching wherever they went, without the study of tongues and without scientific research and arrangement. Our circumstances are widely different. All forms of miraculous agency are now unknown. We have surprising inventions of science and art, and other great natural powers, but these do not qualify our foreign missionaries, for going to work among the Heathen, as our domestic ones can do, among their own countrymen. They have multifarious labors to perform, which could have had no place among the primitive Christians. They are required by the great difference of their means and circumstances (who can think otherwise ?) to give themselves to the study of languages, the translation of the scriptures, the reducing of barbarous tongues to writing, the gathering and teaching primary and other schools, the preparing of books, the providing, in short, a complete apparatus for introducing and perpetuating a state of Christian civilization ; and thus, laying such foundations for permanence and growth in the churches, planted by them, as could not have been laid in the apostolic days. It may be that they have not occupied themselves as much in preaching, as Paul and Barnabas in their circumstances would have done. But we do not forget that other great and arduous works have been on their hands, which they have well discharged ; and that they were bound to pursue on the whole, as they have nobly done, a system of operations, demanding for the production of its results, much time and

patience. And now, if no such sudden and overwhelming success come at once, as that which followed Apostolic ministrations, shall we yield ourselves to the paralyzing influence of disappointment?

The actual measure of our success has not been small. It has far transcended our expectations. What early friend of the cause was sanguine enough to hope, that there would be at this day, one hundred and eighty thousand converts from Heathenism in Christian communion, and two hundred thousand heathen minds under training in Christian schools;* or that such scenes of Divine grace as these at the Sandwich Islands, would be so soon realized; that the greatest revivals scarcely excepting those of the Apostolic period, and the largest churches in the world, would be there: that of those, but as yesterday most barbarous people, a larger proportion would be spiritual christians, than of the inhabitants of any other portion of Christendom of equal extent; and that civilized life on firm supports would be rapidly advancing among them to maturity! The missions in the South Sea Islands, after wrestling hard, like Jacob, against great seeming discouragements, have had results not less surprisingly prosperous. "From that time to this," says their martyr Williams, "one rapid series of successes has attended our labors, so that island after island, and group after group, have in rapid succession, been brought under the influence of the gospel; so much so, indeed, that at the present time, we do not know of any group, or any single island of importance, within two thousand miles of Tahiti, in any direction, to which the glad tidings of salvation have not been conveyed." But our success is not limited by the number of our converts, or the size and prosperity of our churches and schools, or by our progress in the work of civilization, or by the extent to which the gospel message has been published. If in the Apostolic times, nations had offered themselves to be taken under Christian training, if the praises of evangelization had been pronounced in those days, by bodies of scientific and learned men, on account of its influence on the civil, political, commercial, and literary interests of mankind, and if public sentiment almost throughout the civilized world, had changed from scorn or pity into earnest and warm approbation, would not these facts have been counted amongst the proofs and the items of Apostolic success? But by facts such as these, doth the Providence of God, most benignly and graciously smile on the missions in which we are engaged. Surely if any persons have been waiting for success to move them to take part with us, they need wait no longer.

We have had to encounter afflictions. Lives of the highest promise have been sacrificed; and some of our plans have been thwarted; but there were such things in the days of Christ and his Apostles, and we have no cause to regard them in any other light than as trials of our faith. Our only real discouragement has been the great difficulty of meeting the demands for the church's liberality, arising from the unlooked for, and wonderful prosperity of our missions.

* See Great Commission, p. 190.

3. But it is not only by smiling on our churches and missions, that God hath expressed his high delight in our work, but likewise by his Providential agency in arranging and ordering things in the state of the world. If any one has doubt on this point, he must, we think, be of an unspiritual or uninformed mind. The signs of the times, the condition and circumstances in which the world has been placed, and in which it has been continued, have been, from the commencement of the work such as to invite and allure us on to its most diligent prosecution. How has the world been and how is it yet standing before us, in those relations which most concern us as engaged in its evangelization? If we survey it in a religious point of view,—of the three comprehensive divisions to which it may be reduced, the Brahminic, the Mahometan, and the Christian,—the two former present themselves, as enfeebled, decrepid, inaggressive, decaying, ready and almost willing to perish; while the latter after the conflicts of eighteen hundred years, hath renewed its vigor, and is bearing down upon the others, with triumphant force.—If we look at it in its political circumstances, where do we behold the ascendancy of strength, greatness, and empire, but in those nations, which are the seats of our missionary associations, and the sources of the piety, liberality and self-sacrificing zeal by which the work is carried on? If we contemplate it, in regard of the trade, the arts, the intellect, the literature, the enterprise, the wealth, the happiness of the people, still the advantages, in a pre-eminent degree, are with those portions of it, which in more senses than one, may be termed the missionary countries of the globe. And then, what does it mean, that for the last eight and twenty years, the great powers of the earth have remained in so profound a peace among themselves, and that where hostilities have had place, they have been so uniformly overruled for the advancement of our design? This form of encouragement we may remark has been almost constantly cumulative. If the last year, the heathen world presented openings for missionary labor, which it had never done before, the openings this year are wider, more numerous, and more attractive. Since our last annual meeting, the great and insurmountable wall of China, has fallen; and thus hath been thrown open at once, by a gracious and high-working Providence, which should flood the universal church with joy, a new and almost boundless field of missions—a world in itself—containing nearly four hundred millions of people, before regarded as almost inaccessible, by any other than miraculous power. And how signal and deserving of lofty praise, have been the recent interpositions and steps of the Divine power, with reference to the preservation and establishment of peace between the nations embracing our Missionary Boards? When we consider the disastrous influence of a war between those nations, especially on the work of evangelization, the eminent peril to which peace was exposed, and the very remarkable measures and arrangements both in this country and in England, by which the peril was removed and the bands of peace ren-

dered stronger than before; can we avoid recognizing with thankful and rejoicing hearts, the Hand of God displayed to show us the profound interest which He takes in our enterprise, and to encourage us to go on with it, to the uttermost of our ability?

In short, we are bold to say without the least hesitation, that if ever the light of the Divine countenance was lifted up upon any human undertaking, it is shining at this moment, in the fulness of its expanding, vitalizing and cheering influence on the missionary work in which English and American Christians are engaged. By his blessing on our churches, and on our missions, and by his providential disposals and movements among mankind, God so discovers his great pleasure in this work, that he might well upbraid us, with utter indifference to his favor if we are not steadfast, immoveable and always abounding, in the use of every appropriate means of its advancement.

VI. The sixth motive to progress is the ground we have to hope that the future advances of the Gospel, are to be exceedingly more rapid than the past. We can only touch upon a topic, on which we should rejoice to enlarge. The destined dominion of Christianity is universal. Its first victories however glorious, will have no glory, comparatively, amid the splendors of those, which it is yet to achieve. All nations are to be evangelized; the world is to be renewed; Heathenism, Mahometanism, all false systems are to pass away; the kingdoms of the world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ; and the knowledge of God and his truth is to cover the earth, as the waters cover the seas. And it is in the highest degree probable, if not wholly beyond doubt, that the time for effecting this mighty triumph is short. If it were to commence immediately, nay, if it have already commenced, as it probably has done, its course must be incomparably swift in order to reach its termination within the longest period, to which by the general belief of the church it can be extended. The conviction seems warranted and demanded not only by the sound interpretation of the prophecies, but by the entire panorama of Providence, that the promised predominance of the Gospel, is almost at the doors. The long duration of the limited and depressed condition of the church; the world's ripeness and readiness for a change; the facilities for an almost winged intercourse with the most distant parts, making in effect one end of the earth neighbor of another; the ubiquity of British and American influence; and the rapid extension of the English language and literature through Europe and Asia; the honors paid to the work of evangelization by the most enlightened persons and societies; the unlimited plans and enterprises of christian philanthropy; and above all the vast increase of the spirit of prayer; have conduced to the wide spread impression among the more spiritual part of the church, that the future march of Christianity to universal empire, will be more like an already victorious army hastening to the spoil, than, as it hath heretofore been, like one slowly, laboriously, and painfully, making its way over alpine

heights, to the field where the decisive battle remains to be fought and won.

It is freely admitted that we see not in operation, any sufficient causes for the production of the great result. But our reliance is not limited to natural or visible agencies. The work of evangelism is a work of faith. We look for sudden and surprising interventions of the Divine power, to render favorable influences effectual, and to overrule unfavorable ones. We do this under warrant both of scripture, and the analogy of the past. And we do it with the more confidence, when we consider the influence of prayer on the mind of God. That influence hath been accumulating, day and night, through all the ages of the past; but in our times, as it hath been very eloquently said, "a chain of prayer beginning in the farthest east, is carried round with the sun to the farthest west, in the islands of the Pacific, through all the hours of time." When we remember this, are we presumptuous in the hope, that as the patience of God bears long with the wicked until they have perfectly filled their measure of iniquity, and then gives free place to the full visitations of his reluctant wrath, so, after God hath kept his elect crying to him incessantly from the beginning, and hath in our day so mightily augmented their number and their importunity, he will at length vouchsafe, as in a moment of time, such unparalleled and immeasurable effusions of his Spirit, as will make the remaining course of the Gospel, almost like the lightning which lighteneth out of one part under heaven and shineth unto the other part under heaven.

But let it be observed, that we are pressing this high hope as a motive to missionary zeal. If God is about to work swiftly and mightily for the peaceful extension of his kingdom, his people will be set to working for this purpose, also swiftly and mightily. It is only in and through their agency that God exerteth his own. If he stretch forth his hand as in the beginning, the church will be quickened, and moved, and engaged, as she was at first. She will again feel, as it has well been said, the presence of her invisible King and eternal Lord; the souls of christians will again overflow with the plenitude of spiritual and heavenly life; and they will again cease to value earthly existence, and be willing to sacrifice it in the struggle against the powers of darkness. For as the church is the body of Christ, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all, when she makes no revelation of saving power, none will be made. We are looking therefore for a change in the church, of which the anticipated change in the state of mankind, shall be but the just result and full development. Indeed the latter change will be nothing other than the former, extended by the process of assimilation, even as the leaven by the same process leaveneth the mass in which it hath been hidden. So that as Paul told his shipwrecked fellow voyagers to whom he had promised safety in the name of the Lord, that unless the shipmen abode in the ship, they could not be saved, may it be said to the church, with all the pledges and promises of the world's conversion before her, that the

world will not be converted, unless she stir up herself, to the requisite and appropriate exertions for its recovery. And further, as Christ said concerning Judas, 'The Son of Man goeth as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed,' may we not say to the Christians of this generation, that although the world will be evangelized according to the sure word of God, yet woe unto them, if with all their advantages and encouragements for going forward in the work of missions, they falter in that work, ere its end is fully reached.

- VII. A seventh reason for advancement therefore exists in the fact, that there is no guaranty against the consequences of our halting. No prophecies, no signs, no facilities and preparations, no vivid anticipations of the latter glory as about to break forth like the lightning's flash, can shut the door against these consequences. The eternal principles of the Divine government, the perfections of the Divine Nature, require that door to remain open. Close it, and the penalty of the highest disobedience, the displays of God's punitive displeasure against aggravated sin, and of course the Divine benevolence will disappear: for no evil can be compared to the relaxation of the bonds of the Divine empire. Let us then glance at the consequences of not advancing. We shall not remain long at a stand, when we have once decided against progress. Well did our report of last year declare, that it is the law of Heaven, that in the christian race, we should press onward, never content with present attainments, present doings, present sacrifices. There is the certainty of decline, in ceasing to be aggressive and onward. That halt is virtually a backward step, and it may prove to be an irrecoverable fall. It shews inherent instability and weakness, and it inspires distrust and discouragement. It has been justly and very seasonably remarked,* that the souls of men are not likely to be stirred to support adequately a work, even in its present state, unless it give signs of continued advancement. If we come to a stand, it will not be long before the churches will begin to abate their interest, their prayers, their confidence, their support. The results hasten—one after another, our missionary operations come to an end, our schools are dispersed, our missionaries recalled, our stations abandoned, and at length our holy enterprise given over as impracticable, or to be accomplished in other days and by other hands. And then, how much better had it been for the cause of evangelization if the idea of modern missions had never been conceived. At what immense disadvantages will the christians of a future day enter on the work. And how will antichrist, whom our successes have enlisted in active opposition, glory over us and the cause, while occupying our deserted positions, and either numbering our churches as his own, or persecuting them to death, or scattering them again among the heathen.—And by what strange and terrible judgments upon our domestic

* By the Rev. Dr. Williams of New-York.

churches, may we expect to be visited. How long will our revivals and annual jubilees of benevolence remain, when the spirit of missions has departed? What else were to be anticipated, but that a general and unparalleled blight would overspread the fair heritage of God, and that all forms of error and corruption would infest it, until it became a scene of utter desolation? And with such appalling degeneracy in the church, what would be the state of civil society? Unless the loudest admonitions both of Scripture and of history be as empty noise, there will be commotions, revolutions, tribulations; signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and upon earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth. Fathers and brethren, it is truly an awful responsibility which we and our cotemporary fellow christians, are under. O, with what interest does Heaven look down upon this anniversary meeting. Methinks the holy angels, would fain appear amongst us, if that might be, to animate us in our work. Nor are the powers of darkness less interested in this occasion. In such circumstances were it not easier, to give up our self-indulgences, our possessions, our lives, than to entertain for one moment, the thought of standing still in this work? Were not those then alarming words, which were cited near the beginning of this discourse, as it were out of our own mouths: "This great and favored community has been virtually at a stand for a series of years in the work of Foreign Missions." Should we not tremble at this fact as portending danger, and announce it again and again with still deepening awe on our minds, and continue the announcement, until our breath fail us, or until the danger is seen, and if possible averted by a new onward movement. May it not be that we ourselves are not deeply enough impressed with the reality and fearfulness of the danger? May their not be a lurking presumption in our minds that the tree in this case will not be suffered to yield its fruits; that there will be some interference with the stated connexion and sequence of things; that the Divine purposes and the prophecies cannot otherwise be fulfilled; that the great providential preparations and arrangements of the times, will otherwise be without an end? Let us not be taken in this snare. If such a presumption would induce security in our minds, let us resist it, by recalling the dreadful facts of history, which show how unsafe is such a reliance, by remembering that the relation of cause and effect is surer than our pre-sentiments respecting the unfulfilled counsels of God, or our interpretation of prophecy and signs; and by considering the temerity and guilt of so limiting the Holy One, as to make him incapable of accomplishing his purposes except by violating the order of nature and the laws of his government. The acceptable year of the Lord has, not seldom been also, the day of the vengeance of our God. If the time is at hand for giving Christianity the empire of the world, judgments may also be at hand, to do in the way of wrath and destruction, that which might have been done in the joyful and glorious way

of converting and saving grace, by the due prosecution of the work of propagating the Gospel.

VIII. The last reason which we shall urge for going on with this work as vigorously and expeditiously as possible, is, that this is demanded in order to meet contrary movements occasioned by the missionary proceedings of these times. The great adversary hath not been an indifferent observer of these proceedings. His plan of opposition has begun to reveal itself. It has had a four-fold development. A philosophical atheism is displaying itself amongst us, in seductive and audacious forms. Rationalism, professing no unfriendly purpose against Christianity, while renouncing its divinity, its peculiar claims to inspiration, and its miracles, is laboring to undermine its deep foundations. Anti-protestantism has sprung up in a new and dishonorable shape, and in the midst of protestant churches and institutions, and by persons holding membership in them, is freely reproaching the great leaders and martyrs of the reformation as schismatics, and the reformation itself as a deplorable event; and though it avows no intention of enthroning over us the man of sin himself, is contending for the enormous delusions and heresies of his system, and making justification by faith, as held forth by Luther with such overwhelming force against the empire of darkness, as the chief and first-born of errors, worse than heathenism itself.* And finally, papal propagandism with its well-planned and well-sustained missions, is resolutely disputing the day with us, both at home and abroad, employing against us, its jesuitical calumnies and deceits, its lying wonders and miracles, its imposing pomp of ceremonies, its ample treasures wherever they can be availably applied, and ready and waiting should there be occasion and ability, to renew its deadly anathemas and persecutions. The powers of darkness were never more disturbed since the death of Christ; never more profoundly moved with hostile feelings and designs against the Lord and his Anointed. There are indications not a few, of the coming on of a spiritual conflict among men, such as the world has not hitherto seen; perhaps, as some confidently think, the battle of the great day of God Almighty. It is to christians the

* "Whether any heresy has ever infested the Church so hateful and unchristian, as this doctrine—the Lutheran doctrine of Justification—it is perhaps, not necessary to determine: none certainly, has ever prevailed so subtle and so extensively poisonous. It is not only that it denies some one essential doctrine of the gospel, (as e. g. inherent righteousness); this all heresies do: it is not only that it corrupts ALL sound christian doctrine, nay, the principle of orthodoxy itself; though this also it certainly does; but its inroads extend farther than this; AS FAR AS ITS FORMAL STATEMENTS ARE CONCERNED, it poisons at the very root, not Christianity only, but natural religion. That obedience to the will of God, with whatever sacrifice of self, is the one thing needful; that sin is the one only danger to be dreaded, the only evil to be avoided; these great truths are the very foundation of natural religion: and inasmuch as this modern system denies these to be ESSENTIAL and NECESSARY truths, we must plainly express our conviction, that a religious heathen, were he REALLY to accept the doctrine which Lutheran LANGUAGE expresses, so far from making any advance, would sustain a heavy loss, in exchanging fundamental truth for fundamental error."—British Critic, for October, 1842, pp. 390, 391,

most momentous problem that ever claimed their attention, what should be their plan of action in these eventful times. The problem is not difficult of solution; the path of wisdom is plain. Two things are certain: First, that if we suffer ourselves to be hindered in our missionary work, by any means whatever, the enemy will obtain his purpose, his plan will succeed. He will not be much disconcerted, though we attack and put to rout one after another, or all at once, the hosts he hath arrayed against us at home, if he can but divert us from our foreign campaign. It was our entrance on that which originated his newly displayed wiles. His great trouble is that we have undertaken in the name of Christ to evangelize the world. His plan has for its main purpose, the putting an end to this work. All our domestic annoyances are intended to effect this result. Success here will pacify and content him. Even his defeats he will count for victories if they contribute in any way to oppose the missionary enterprise.—The second certainty is, that the most effectual way of overcoming the adversary within our domestic and neighborhood precincts, is vigorous and ceaseless and insatiable aggression on his great foreign dominions.—Let us achieve large and brilliant victories there; let us go forth from conquering to conquer among the unevangelized nations of the earth; and we shall be full of life and strength and victory and peace within all our borders; and our home antagonists will be down-hearted and discouraged, and will soon give way before us, having enough to do unless they repent, to bear their own confusion; while we sing our psalms of praise at the spreading triumphs of the kingdom of Christ.

The enemy's own example may be adverted to for our instruction. When he found himself so deplorably at fault at the reformation, in his papal kingdom, his scheme for raising up that kingdom again, and giving it honor in the eyes of men, was by the society of the Jesuits to give it enlargement among his heathen territories; a scheme wisely laid, most faithfully prosecuted, and crowned with astonishing success. It is lawful for us to learn from him. Long enough has the church been kept out of her just sovereignty over the world by suffering herself to be embroiled, through the artifice of Satan, in intestine controversies and border conflicts. Let her at last escape from this infatuation. If she must contend at home, let her do this, remembering that in so far as this contention shall interfere with the work of evangelization, it is, as to the main purpose for which she has earthly existence, the adversary's triumph, and her own defeat and overthrow. Gain what she may in particular victories, her gain is the loss of the world; her petty victories she takes in exchange for the empire of the universe. Let the conquest of the globe, then, be the object of her great ambition, her steadfast and eager pursuit. Especially let it be so now, since it was her recent undertaking of this which has placed her into her present circumstances of overwhelming interest. These strange manifestations, these surprising and astonishing movements against evangelical religion all the world over, these signs of an approaching crisis in the destiny of the human race, what

are they but the appropriate evolutions of an infernal system of resistance to that work of evangelization in which we are engaged? Are the gates of hell at the extremity of their zeal and wisdom to put a stop to that work? and is this the time for us to think of desisting from it? Whatever of Christian manhood there is in us, is revolted at the suggestion. The hour of decision is at hand. The victory at home and in all the earth is ours, if the sacramental host do but prove themselves good soldiers of Jesus Christ in the foreign warfare.

We have endeavored to plead earnestly for progress in the missionary work. OBJECTIONS have not been adverted to; and we have almost doubted, if in this case they should be noticed. Objections, however gravely and forcibly adduced, are sometimes to be disregarded in proportion to their probability of prevailing. It was a law in Israel that if a man, however venerable by character or office, should undertake to show that idolatry was not wrong, so far from being listened to for a moment, he was to be put to death, even though he should give a sign or wonder against steadfastness in God's service, and the sign or wonder should come to pass.* If there were temporal penalties now in the kingdom of God, who would be amenable to them, if not objectors against giving the gospel of salvation to a world perishing in sin?

But what are the chief objections? A mere glance at them will be sufficient to convince us, that to stumble at objections here, is but the part of an uncandid or sadly misguided mind. No objections to progress in missions are weightier than those which are derived from the following sources: A certain interpretation of prophecy; the expensiveness of enlarging our missionary operations; and the wants of Home.—The view of prophecy in question is that which postponing the triumph of Christianity to the personal return of Christ, and making unprecedented corruption in the church and in the world the occasion of that return, renders all previous attempts at evangelization a wasteful and vain expenditure. But can there be a reasonable doubt as to the unsoundness of an exposition or use of prophecy, which makes the Bible at variance with itself; which sets the prophecies against the commandments, the plans and purposes of God against obedience to his revealed will; and which makes void his gracious promises. With whatever ingenuity and power such teaching may be maintained, is it to be received as the true sense of scripture; is it to be believed in, or regarded for one moment with the least allowance? It is the charge of Christ to us, that we give ourselves to the evangelizing of the world: this we certainly know. Shall we now hearken to expounders who would discourage us from obeying our Divine Master? It is not for any man to know with certainty, the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power: These are the secret things which belong to the Lord

* Deut. xiii. 1—5.

our God. Among the things which are revealed, and which belong to us and our children, none is plainer, none more imperative, none more important, than that we go forward as fast as possible with the work of propagating the gospel; and to cease from, or to be at all hindered in this work, because a prophetic theory is against it, is to hearken unto man more than unto God.

The objections from expense are not less repulsive. They imply either that the silver and gold of the earth do not belong to God; or that when he created the precious metals he did not know how much of them he should need for the accomplishment of his ends, or else could not create enough; or that when he made us his stewards he put himself out of ownership, so that we were no longer to regard his interest in the use of property; or that he has given us particular instruction against liberal appropriations for the spread of the gospel, and against self-denial and sacrifices of ease and pleasure for Christ's sake; or, finally, that all these great and shameless impieties are facts.

There is in these objections an effrontery which entitles them to indignant resentment. They are made in the face of existing facts, by which they are reprov'd of glaring hypocrisy. While it is alleged that our missions are too expensive to admit of further advancement, there are not a few members in our churches with more wealth already in possession than can well belong to any one without danger to his soul, who are yet proceeding on to lay up treasures upon treasures, to themselves; adding house to house, and field to field, and investment to investment, and the passion for accumulation enlarged and strengthened by every new accession. And of the rest, there is only here one, and there another, who restrict themselves of any indulgence for the gospel's sake! What respect should be paid to objections on the score of expense, while self-denial is so great a stranger amongst the professed disciples of the cross?

And, after all, what is the truth as to the cost of missions? As a very remarkable illustration on this point, a statement shall be repeated from the Day Spring, with a few verbal changes, concerning the mission at the Sandwich Islands. The pecuniary expense of that mission during twenty-three years has but a little exceeded half a million of dollars. And what has been the result? The language has been reduced to writing; a variety of religious works with the entire Bible have been translated and printed in it, and circulated in great numbers; forty-two thousand persons have been taught to read them; twenty-two churches have been organized, to which twenty-five thousand natives have been admitted; seminaries for training teachers have been established; Christian marriage has been introduced in place of former unspeakable licentiousness; intemperance has been nearly banished; and morality and social improvement have been advanced among the rulers and people; a written constitution and laws have been introduced; and the nation, as it were, a new-

created people has recently taken rank among the great nations of the civilized world:—all for half a million. The result not only great, but good, and only good to all concerned. There is no painful drawback.

What is the cost of other things, and such as wise men approve? The small army of the United States cost last year four millions, nearly eight times as much as this mission from the beginning; and what better results are there to be shewn for it? The original cost of every one of our ships of the line, with one year's expense in service, exceeds what has been spent on this mission. France has expended one hundred and twenty millions, and twenty thousand lives in conquering and holding Algiers; almost two hundred and forty times as much in money, beside the lives, as the entire cost of this mission, and yet what good, to the conquerors or the conquered, has come of it? Christian missions cannot be carried on without pecuniary means. Progress in them will increase the demand for money as well as men. But they are gainful, beyond calculation on the whole. Their reflex influences, to say nothing of their direct results, are more than a hundred fold recompense; and to object to them, because of what they cost, is the madness not only of a rebellion against God, but of sinning against our own richest mercies.

Nor can the objections from domestic exigency better endure examination. They are wholly without force, unless they assume, either that the world has no claim while home has any want unsupplied; or that the wants of home and the world cannot both be met at once; or at least that they cannot be as well met, by receiving simultaneous attention; and if they do involve these assumptions, or either of them, they proclaim their own falsity, and confute themselves. For what is more contrary to truth than that the church is not a debtor to the world till all within her own pale and neighborhood is as the garden of God, or needs no improvement? And not less erroneous are the other positions, that either the world or home must be neglected; that their interests are conflicting; and that if Foreign Missions advance, it must be by exhausting or limiting the resources needed for domestic wants. The work of human salvation is one—the work of God—on whose resources, not ours, it depends; and its parts are so related that it can be neglected no where without injury to the whole, and advanced no where without giving an impulse of new life and strength to the whole: so that contributions to missions wisely made, are in effect contributions to our own churches; nor is it to be questioned that these churches are, at this moment, more benefitted and blessed by means of what they have given for evangelizing the heathen, than they would have been by appropriating it directly to themselves. So preposterous is it to set the claims of home in collision with those of the world, or to imagine that the former will be interfered with by discharging the latter.

It is indeed, wise and requisite, and conformable to scripture precedent, to give present attention to certain portions of the great field rather than others; and among the different localities taken under culture to prefer some one or more, far before the rest; and accordingly, it cannot well be questioned that this country at the present time, should have a very uncommon measure of regard, especially from the American Branch of the Church. The importance of its thorough evangelization is probably overrated by no one. To the soundness of the views, which have been expressed on this subject, with so much earnestness and force, by men of great perspicacity on both sides of the ocean, there can scarcely be a dissenting judgment. So far as can now be seen, all probability and likelihood will fail, or the moral condition of these United States is to decide that of the world. But it is not a logical consequence from this, that we should come to a pause or retard our movements, in the work of Foreign Missions. Our people, whatever they are destined to become, do not yet amount to a fiftieth part of mankind; and it is neither love to the souls of men, nor love to Christ, nor a wise economy, that on a calculation of what a small fraction of the race may grow to in a century or more, will leave the great mass till then, to proceed on to destruction through the third and fourth generations, while the means of evangelizing the whole, are at hand; and while, too, the fraction itself would be better attended to, if the whole were in no way or measure neglected. Never let it be overlooked that the spirit of evangelism is essentially the spirit of foreign missions. In its very nature it is spontaneously and illimitably eggressive. It cannot endure confinement. Its irrepressible tendency is to be abroad in all the earth to its utmost bounds, and in all the isles of the sea, wherever man, the redeemed sinner dwells. To restrain is to enervate and oppress it. It will not, cannot neglect home if it be sent away, but if it go not away, it will be as an invalid within doors, rather to be nursed than to diffuse life and strength. What powerful teaching did our Lord employ to enforce this truth; and what is better corroborated by reflection, observation and experience? While, therefore, we institute comparisons between our land and others, our people and others; and while America in its perspective greatness and power rises in our thought above all the rest of the globe, let us take heed lest a selfish nationality, or pride, or carnal reasoning so blind us to the true genius of evangelism, that we be found opposing ourselves to the plans and counsels of Infinite Love.

Nor should we think it needless to qualify our confidence as to the coming fortunes of this or any other nation. We do not certainly know that the world's end, will not come, ere our anticipated importance as a people can be realized. Or, if that should not be, and if our national advancement and influence be not impeded, we are not sure that God judges as we do, in respect of our eligibility, as the people by whom the world is to be saved. As he has often done before, may he not in this matter again disappoint human expectation; and may not the world's enlargement and deliverance arise from an-

other place, which by its comparative obscurity may render the Hand of God more conspicuous.

In conclusion, then, it remaineth, Fathers, Brethren and Friends, that we gird up the loins of our mind, and strengthen ourselves in God for the fulfilment of that glorious work, in reference to which we have now come together. Better were it for us to die, than to be at a stand in our undertaking. That must not be, until God repent of having determined to save the world. He hath prescribed and commanded our race; let us hold on in it till he himself arrest us, even to the end, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth towards those things which are before. The race to an unbelieving heart, cannot but seem impracticable and preposterous; but it hath been set before us by Him, who calleth for things that are not, and they come, and who, has also guarantied our success, by his promise, oath, death, resurrection and enthronement in Heaven. By these, we know that we are not running in vain. Let increasing progress then be our law, as demanded by those great principles and truths of the gospel, on which missions rest their plea and warrant; by the great precept, "go ye into all the world;" by the long ages of neglect, which this high behest of Heaven hath hitherto received; by the slowness of our own past movements; by the strong encouragement we have in the Divine blessing on our churches and missions, and in the existing state of the world; by the cause we have to hope the future course of Christianity on earth, is to be wonderfully accelerated; by the unspeakable dangers in such circumstances as ours, of any other than this onward way; and by those relations of profound and awful interest, in which our missionary operations have placed us, with the hosts of darkness. Let us turn objections into arguments. Let us demand of those who would dishearten us by their prophetic expositions, if they would by their theories, make void the grace and command of God. Let us tell them who would make missions too expensive, of the resources of their Almighty author, and of their own bad stewardship, and of the cost of other things, and of the countless gains of missions, both to the world and the Church. Let us reply to those who plead against us, as opposing domestic interests, that our Heavenly Father can take care of the world and home at once, and that it is home's honor and happiness, as well as duty, not to confine its influences of "saving health," within its own narrow limits, but to expand and spread them out to the ends of the earth. Let all straitness and restraint be insufferable to us. If required to enlarge our plans, let us praise God for this and wrestle with Him by prayer, and with his people by doctrine and remonstrance and entreaty, for the means of enlargement, until they come. If new openings present themselves, every time we survey the field, let us praise God for this; yea, if a new world suddenly open itself to us, for this also, let us praise God; and farther, if the Spirit be poured out at all our stations, so as to demand a univer-

sal movement, on the part of the Church, equal to that of the primitive times, still let us praise God with all our strength, and cry to him day and night, and give him no rest, until the demand be met, and the Church look forth again as in the day of her espousals, beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners, and become an eternal excellency, the joy of the whole earth, having by the Divine blessing on her influence, recovered the human race from the curse of evil, and united it through Christ to the society of the Holy and the Blessed.

WHY THE WORLD IS NOT CONVERTED.

"The world *is not* converted. The melancholy fact stares us in the face. Yet the world *is to be* converted. That delightful truth shines conspicuously on the pages of the Bible. Why is it not already converted? It *ought* to have been converted ere this. The *order* for its conversion was issued eighteen centuries ago; the *means* for its conversion were so long pointed out; and the promise of the *power* necessary to secure its conversion, accompanied the command to convert. And once, and that shortly after the issuing the order, the world *was* well nigh converted. But *now* the world is far, very far from being converted. It "lieth in wickedness." What is the meaning of it? *Why* is it not converted? Whose is the fault? Look not up to heaven for the inquiry, as if the reason was to be found there, among the mysteries of the eternal mind. Look elsewhere. The fact we deplore, results not from any lack of the benevolent disposition of God. No! "God so loved *the world*, that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." What could he have *felt*, or *done* more? The *object* of his love, the world—its *gift*, his Son! Could it have been more comprehensive, or more munificent? Nor is the reason found in any deficiency in the atonement made by Christ, for he is the propitiation "for the sins of the *whole world*"—the Lamb of God who "taketh away the sin of *the world*." Nor is it owing to any limitation in the commission of the Holy Spirit; for of him it is testified that when he should "reprove *the world* of sin." And the commission to the *human* agents of the work was as extensive:—"Go ye into *all the world*; preach the gospel to *every creature*; teach *all nations*." And the promise of the presence and power of Christ to be with them is also without restriction. See what goes before, and what comes after that great commission. The words which precede it, are, "All power is given unto me in heaven and earth." The words which follow, are, "And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." You must look somewhere else than *upward* for the reason why the world is not converted. Look *beneath*—*around*—*within*."